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BEST-EVER HAUL: INDIAN BOXERS PUNCH WAY TO HISTORY AT WORLDS

Three men pugilists advance to semifinal round and assure themselves of three medals, previous best came in 2019 when the country won two

Deepak, Hussamuddin, Nishant mark red-letter day

After Deepak Bhoria (51 kg, an Olympic discipline) took down Nurzhigit Diushebaev of Kyrgyzstan by a 5-0 verdict, Mohammed Hussamuddin, engineered a tight 3-2 win over Bulgaria's Diaz Ibanez, in the 57 kg discipline. Rounding off the winners was Nishant Dev (71kg) who beat favourite, Cuba's Jorge Cuellar, by a unanimous verdict | P13

Semifinals on May 12

After a day of rest, the three Indians will be back in action on Friday. At stake is a place in the finals

No Indian men's boxer has ever gone to win gold at this event. In fact, only one Indian — Amit Panghal in 2019 — has reached the title clash

"We want Nishant to stay busy, feign, throw jabs and keep the rival busy
- CA Kuttappa, India chief

SEVEN

NO. OF MEDALS WON BY THE MEN AT THE WORLDS BEFORE WEDNESDAY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

FATE SEALED IN EVMs; EXIT POLLS PREDICT HUNG HOUSE

They give lead to Grand Old Party in all regions except Coastal Karnataka; more seats for Cong than BJP even in Bengaluru

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

WITH polling for Assembly elections ending on Wednesday, exit polls have indicated Congress having an edge over the ruling BJP, although the state may end up with a hung Assembly. The results will be announced on May 13.

The exit polls show Congress leading in all regions, except coastal Karnataka, which is known to be BJP's bastion.

The India Today-Axis My India exit poll, which looked at region-wise performance of political parties, gave an absolute majority for Congress with 122-140 seats, 62-80 for BJP, 20-25 for JDS and three for independents.

Surprisingly, the exit polls predicted more seats for Congress than BJP even in Bengaluru city. Currently, BJP has more MLAs in the state capital where Modi campaigned extensively.

In Central Karnataka, Hyderabad-Karnataka and Mumbai-Karnataka regions, Congress is expected to do better than BJP, according to exit polls.

Similarly, Times Now ETG exit poll gave Congress 113 seats — the magic number for a simple majority — with 40% vote share, followed by BJP 85 seats with 36.7 %, JDS 23 seats with 16.1%, and others 3 with 6.3%.

On the other hand, the Newsnation-CGS exit poll gave a simple majority to BJP with 114 seats, 86 to Congress, 21 to JDS and three to independents.

JDS, which lost some leaders to Congress, may get a drubbing in its stronghold of Old Mysuru region, which is a Vokkaliga bastion with KPCC president DK Shivakumar — also a strong leader from the community — throwing his hat in the ring for chief minister's post.

Except for Zee Matrize and Republic TV -PMARQ, which gave 25-33 and 24-32 seats, respectively for JDS, most exit polls indicated the party may not cross 30. However, in case of a fractured mandate, JDS may play the role of a kingmaker again, according to political pundits. JDS leaders, including former PM HD Deve Gowda and former CM HD Kumaraswamy, had campaigned extensively in the Old Mysuru region. CONTINUED ON: P5

"I will win with a record margin... So is the BJP, which is going to win with a record number of seats... the party will get a comfortable majority
Basavaraj Bommai, CM

"I must thank Congress workers and leaders for their untiring efforts and hard work in the campaign season
DK Shivakumar, KPCC president

"In several constituencies which had winnable candidates, I have failed in financially supporting the candidates
HD Kumaraswamy, JDS leader

INSIDE

Confident of majority: CM

I will become CM: Siddu

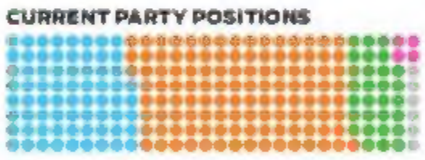
P4

People wait in queues to cast their votes at Padmanabhanagar in Bengaluru on Wednesday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

K'TAKA EXIT POLLS FOR ALL 224 SEATS

Survey	Cong+	BJP	JDS	Oth
India Today	122-140	62-80	20-25	3
ABP News-C Voter	100-112	83-95	21-29	2-6
India TV CNX	110-120	80-90	20-24	1-3
News Nation CGS	86	114	21	3
Republic TV-PMARQ	94-108	85-100	24-32	2-6
Asianet Jan ki Baat	91-106	94-117	14-24	0-2
Times Now ETG	113	85	23	3
TV9 Bharatvarsh-Polistrat	99-109	88-98	21-26	0-4
Zee Matrize	103-118	79-94	25-33	2-5

CURRENT PARTY POSITIONS



Congress 69 • BJP 116 • JD(S) 29 • Others 4
Vacant 5 (due to resignations)

72.67%

Voter turnout in Karnataka, the **highest-ever**, surpassing 72.13% in the last state Assembly polls in 2018

State logs all-time high voter turnout of 72.67%

ASHWINI M SRIPAD & CHETAN MG @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA recorded an all-time high voter turnout of 72.67% in the Assembly elections on Wednesday. This excluded postal ballots and home voting. Bengaluru remained sluggish at 54.14%.

Polling in the state was by and large peaceful barring a few incidents, including smashing of EVMs and VVPATs in Vijayapura district and clashes between workers of political parties.

At 10.30 pm, officials were collating voting details from across the state and the percentage was on the rise as the paper went to press. Election results will be declared on Saturday.

In 2018, the state recorded 72.13%, with Bengaluru recording 54.75%. Rural areas witnessed a massive response from voters compared to urban areas. People started thronging polling stations from 7 am and voting gained momentum by noon.

Most of the districts witnessed brisk voting in the evening. High voter turnout and rains interrupting the voting process led to polling continuing well past the 6 pm deadline in some places in Uttara Kannada and Dakshina Kannada districts. The scorching summer in parts of the state did not deter senior citizens and pregnant women from exercising their franchise while brides and grooms took time from traditional rituals to cast their votes on their big day. CONTINUED ON: P4

BELITTLING GIFT OF DEMOCRACY, FIRST-TIME VOTERS SELL THEIR VOTES IN MYSURU

KARTHIK K K @ Mysuru

IN what can be termed a bad precedent in democracy, many young and first-time voters sold their votes for a price in the old-Mysore region during polling on Wednesday. This is expected to turn the poll results upside down in many constituencies.

Although the district administration and Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) committee made all preparations to ensure a free and fair election this time, the first-time and young voters had other plans.

This was evident in many polling booths in urban as well as rural areas of the district. While many such voters were busy contacting those distributing money for votes, some waited near polling booths for agents of political parties. A few were seen striking a deal with the agents.

Over 50,000 youngsters were added to the voters' list in the district this year with Chamundeshwari constituency reporting the highest number of 6,068 such voters, followed by 5,663 in Hunsur, 5,170 in KR Nagar, and 4,944 in Narasimharaja constituencies. At Hyrige village in HD Kote taluk, many voters aged between 19 and 23 were seen in front of the polling booth waiting for village leaders to offer them the "best" price for their votes. Mahesha, a college student, was heard telling a JDS leader that he is ready to sell his vote. While he was offered Rs 1,000, Mahesha demanded Rs 500 more stating that he will bring four more voters. He made a final offer of Rs 1,500 per vote. P5

NAB gets physical custody of Imran

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

FORMER Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan was on Wednesday handed over to the National Accountability Bureau for eight days, a day after the bureau got the 70-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief arrested in the Al-Qadir University Trust case, triggering violent protests.

The Al-Qadir case alleges Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi obtained billions of rupees for their trust from property tycoon Malik Riaz in exchange of favours, causing huge losses to the exchequer.

Separately, Khan was indicted in the Toshakhana corruption case, in which he is charged with selling the expensive gifts he received as prime minister in violation of rules.

Hearings of the two cases were held in a make-shift court in Islamabad Police Lines.

During the hearing, Imran Khan reportedly told the court that he feared for his life. "I don't want what happened to Maqsood Ahmad (money laundering accused who died under mysterious circumstances in UAE). They give an injection and the person dies slowly," sources quoted Khan as saying in the court.

A supporter of Imran Khan catapults stones at the police in Peshawar, Pakistan on Wednesday | AP

Violent clashes continued on Wednesday. According to reports, seven persons have been killed and 300 injured in the clashes. The army is out in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Police have arrested over 1,150 PTI activists in Punjab alone. There were rumours of top PTI leaders including Shah Mehmood Qureshi being arrested but the former foreign minister came on Twitter to deny the reports.

Meanwhile, 32 Indian Bridge (card deck game) players are in Lahore for a tournament being hosted by the Bridge Federation of Pakistan. Palestine, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan and Bangladesh are participating in the tournament, which will conclude on May 13.

Indian Bridge players in Pak asked to leave

The Indian High Commission in Islamabad has advised the 32 Bridge players currently in Lahore for a tournament, to immediately return to the country in view of the fluid situation in Pakistan

Kerala doc stabbed to death by patient

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kollam

IN a gruesome incident, a young lady doctor was stabbed to death by a man she was treating at emergency section of the government hospital in Kottarakkara, Kerala in the wee hours of Wednesday.

Vandana Das, 23, was killed by S Sandeep who was brought to the hospital by police for treating some injuries on his ankle. The 42-year-old man, a school teacher, had sought police help claiming he was assaulted by neighbours.

Remya, a nursing officer who was on duty at the time of the incident, said Sandeep seemed to be intoxicated. He turned violent while being attended by medical staff and stabbed those around him with a scissor he grabbed from the dressing table.

Dr Vandana Das

Vandana, who was practising as a house surgeon at the hospital, was first taken to a nearby hospital and later shifted to a private hospital in Thiruvananthapuram, where she breathed her last. Her postmortem report said there were 11 stab wounds on her body.

Police said six health officials, including Vandana, were present in the hospital at the time of the incident. Apart from the doctor, he stabbed his neighbour Binu and home guard Alexkutty, who were standing outside the dressing room. ASI Manilal, who was on aid post duty, interfered but was attacked.

Ambulance driver Rajesh S told *TNIE* the man was on a stabbing spree. "I saw the assailant stabbing a police officer. I tried to grab him from behind but he injured my left arm. Then the sub-inspector reached the spot; he was hit on the head," he said.

The Indian Medical Association has called for state-wide protests demanding better security measures for medical staff.

No adoption bar on single person in same-sex union

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday said the society today has gone beyond the concept of motherhood, adding the law permits individuals to adopt a child irrespective of marital status.

Pointing out that the question of guardianship is evolving, a five-judge bench hearing a batch of pleas seeking legal recognition to same-sex marriage, said the law recognises adoption for a variety of reasons apart from "an ideal family" having its own biological children. "We've gone beyond motherhood and gone into parenthood today and there are single parents. The question of guardianship is evolving. What is central to this is the welfare of the child," Justice S R Bhat said. P9

EXPRESS READ

President Biden to host PM Modi in US on June 22

Washington: US President Joe Biden will host PM Narendra Modi for an official visit to the US, which will include a state dinner, on June 22, the White House said.

Tamil Nadu govt files case against Annamalai

Chennai: The TN government filed a criminal complaint against BJP state chief K Annamalai on Wednesday, for allegedly defaming CM M K Stalin. P5